

Message Text

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ACTION OES-07

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 NSAE-00
NSCE-00 SSO-00 USIE-00 INRE-00 ACDA-12 AGRE-00
AID-05 CEA-01 CEQ-01 CG-00 COME-00 DLOS-09
DOTE-00 EB-08 EPA-01 SOE-02 DOE-11 FMC-01 TRSE-00
H-01 INR-10 INT-05 IO-13 JUSE-00 L-03 NSF-01
OMB-01 PA-01 PM-05 SP-02 SS-15 /128 W
-----031759 091347Z /13

O R 091130Z MAR 78
FM AMEMBASSY OSLO
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 5402
INFO AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
USMISSION USNATO

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 OSLO 1176

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: EFIS, PBOR, NO, UR
SUBJ: OSLO PRESS CONTINUED TO DISCUSS US VIEWS OF "GREY ZONE"
AGREEMENT

1. BEGIN SUMMARY: ALL OSLO MORNING NEWSPAPERS ON MARCH 9
HAVE DEVOTED CONSIDERABLE SPACE AND HEADLINES) TO DISCUSSIONS
OF ALLEGED US VIEWS AND ACTIONS CONCERNING THE "GREY ZONE" AGREE-
MENT. (THE STORTING DEBATE ON THE MATTER WHICH HAD BEEN POSTPONED
ON YESTERDAY IS NOW AGAIN SCHEDULED FOR THE MORNING OF
MARCH 9.) THE PRESS COVERAGE INCLUDES A SUBSTANTIAL AMOUNT
OF NEGATIVE COMMENT ON THE US ROLE, INCLUDING SPECULATION
ON AMERICAN INTERFERENCE IN NORWEGIAN POLITICAL DECISIONS
INCLUDING THE POSSIBILITY THAT THE WASHINGTON STORIES
WERE PLANTED IN ORDER TO HELP THE OPPOSITION PARTIES DEFEAT
THE GREY ZONE PROPOSAL. THE GERMAN TROOP DECISION,
IS ALSO CITED AS AN EXAMPLE OF US CONCERN, SPECIFICALLY IN
REGARD TO THE LACK OF GON COMMUNICATION PRIOR TO THE ANNOUNCE-
MENT. DESPITE US STATEMENTS TO THE CONTRARY, SOME JOURNALISTS
STATE THAT WASHINGTON SOURCES HAVE REPEATED THEIR
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CONCERN OVER THE FISHERIES AGREEMENT. IN ADDITION, THE
STATE DEPARTMENT IS CITED AS BEING "VERY SURPRISED" THAT
ITS ATTITUDE ON THE PACT HAD NOT BEEN CONVEYED TO THE STORTING BY
FOREIGN RELATIONS COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN, STEEN, AND EVENSEN.
END SUMMARY.

2. AFTENPOSTEN RAN A FRONT PAGE STORY HEADLINED "US AMBASSADOR

CALLED TO FRYDENLUND.". THE STORY STATES THAT THE TWO DISCUSSED WASHINGTON REPORTS OF US UNCERTAINTY ABOUT NORWAY'S HANDLING OF A RELATIONS WITH THE USSR. IN THE SAME EDITION, FOREIGN OFFICE PRESS SPOKESMAN EGIL HELLE SAYS THE MINISTRY HAS ROUTINELY RECEIVED REPORTS FROM WASHINGTON CONCERNING EVENSEN'S AND STEEN'S TALKS WHILE THERE. QUESTIONED AS TO WHETHER THE CONTENTS OF THESE REPORTS CORROBORATE THE RECENT NEWS STORIES, HELLE SAYS, THEY CONFIDENTIAL.

3. AFTENPOSTEN ALSO QUOTES FRYDENLUND AS SAYING IN HIS TALKS WITH US OFFICIALS HE HAS MET NO "REACTIONS" EITHER ON THE GREY ZONE AGREEMENT OR ON THE HANDLING OF RELATIONS IN THE NORTH IN GENERAL. HE SAID AMBASSADOR LERNER HAD BRIEFED HIM ORALLY ABOUT THESE MATTERS. FRYDENLUND SAID NORWAY HAS HAD CONTACTS WITH WESTERN COUNTRIES REGARDING THE GREY ZONE AGREEMENT. "WE HAVE AT ALL TIMES FELT THAT WAS SUPPORT OF OUR LINE, BUT THAT ONE MUST ANTICIPATE SPECULATIONS, DURING MY BRIEFING OF SECRETARY VANCE LAST JULY IN WASHINGTON, I RECEIVED NO REACTION TO THE AGREEMENT, AND THE US UNDERScoreD THE FACT THAT IT CONSIDERS THIS A BILATERAL AGREEMENT." FRYDENLUND DOES NOT SEE THIS AS INTERFERENCE IN NORWEGIAN POLITICS ON THE EVE OF THE STORTING'S HANDLING OF THE GREY ZONE RATIFICATION. "IT IS ONLY NATURAL THAT THE AMERICANS FOLLOW THE DEVELOPMENT UP NORTH WITH INTEREST." REIULF STEEN REITERATES THAT DURING HIS WASHINGTON VISIT HE GOT THE IMPRESSION THAT THE AMERICANS CONSIDERED THIS A CONFIDENTIAL

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BILATERAL NORWEGIAN-SOVIET MATTER.

4. NRK'S WASHINGTON CORRESPONDENT KARI GRETHE MAKJAN SAID ON THE EVENING OF MARCH 8 THAT WASHINGTON SOURCES REITERATE THAT THERE HAS BEEN US CONCERN OVER THE GREY ZONE AGREEMENT. BOTH SHE AND PER EGIL HEGGE REPORT THAT THE STATE DEPARTMENT BRIEFLY STATES IT WOULD BE IMPROPER FOR THE US TO COMMENT ON THE BILATERAL RELATIONS OF OTHER COUNTRIES. BEYOND THIS, SHE SAYS, THE STATE DEPARTMENT SAYS NOTHING ABOUT THE CONFIDENTIAL DISCUSSION WITH NORWEGIAN POLITICIANS.

5. HEGGE, WRITING FOR AFTENPOSTEN FROM WASHINGTON STATES THAT US CONCERN IS BASED ON WHAT THE AMERICANS SEE AS AN INCREASING SOVIET INTEREST IN THE AREAS IN THE NORTH... THE CONCERN IS SAID TO ALSO RELATE TO NORWAY'S HANDLING OF THE WEST GERMAN PARTICIPATION IN NATO EXERCISES IN NORTH NORWAY. AMERICAN OFFICIALS WHO VISITED NORWAY LAST YEAR, HE WRITES, WERE NOT INFORMED THAT NORWAY PLANNED TO SET A CEILING ON THE WEST GERMAN CONTINGENT. HE ADDS THAT NEITHER THE US NOR OTHER NATO PARTNERS WERE BRIEFED ABOUT THIS BEFORE DEFENSE MINISTER HANSEN HELD HIS SPEECH IN TRONDHEIM, AND SAID SO... WHILE THE US IS NOT OVERLY CONCERNED ABOUT THE SIZE OF THE GERMAN CONTINGENT, IT IS THE INFORMATION

GAP WHICH IS DISTRUBING, HEGGE SAYS.

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NSAE-00 NSF-01 OMB-01 PA-01 PM-05 SP-02 SS-15
NSCE-00 SSO-00 USIE-00 INRE-00 /128 W
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 OSLO 1176

6. NRK RADIO REPORTED LAST NIGHT (MARCH 8) THAT CERTAIN MP'S ARE
SURPRISED THAT THE ALLEGATIONS ABOUT US CONCERN ARE
MADE KNOWN SO CLOSE TO THE GREY ZONE RATIFICATION DEBATE.

7. FOREIGN AFFAIRS COMMENTATOR BJORN HANSEN WRITES IN
ARBEIDERBLADET THAT "IT IS CLEAR THAT IN LEADING POLITICAL
CIRCLES IN NORWAY, THE AMERICAN INITIATIVE IN THE GREY
ZONE MATTER IS INTERFERENCE WITH NORWEGIAN POLITICAL
DECISION." ESPECIALLY THE TIME ELEMENT, THE FACT THAT THE
"AMERICANS CHOSE TO INFORM THE NORWEGIAN CORRESPONDENTS
AT THIS TIME, STRENGTHENS THE IMPRESSION THIS IS A
CONSCIOUS ATTEMPT TO INFLUENCE NORWEGIAN POLITICAL DECISIONS."
HANSEN SAYS IT IS NOT SO MUCH THE CONTENTS OF THE ALLEGED
US CONCERN, OR WORRY, BUT THE TIME CHOSEN SKOR THESE LEAKS--
LESS THAN TWO DAYS BEFORE THE STORTING DEBATE ON RATIFICATION
OF A TREATY WHOSE CONTENTS HAVE BEEN PUBLIC KNOWLEDGE FOR
THREE QUARTERS OF A YEAR. HE ALSO ADDS THAT "IT IS CLEAR
THAT WHAT HAS HAPPENED CAN HAVE SERIOUS CONSEQUENCES FOR
FUTURE HANDLING OF PROBLEMS IN THE NORTH. BOTH THE US
ASSERTION OF AN INCREASING SOVIET PRESSURE AND THE IMPRESSION
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OF US INVOLVEMENT IN NORWEGIAN POLITICS MIGHT WEAKEN FOREIGN GOVERNMENTS' CONFIDENCE IN NORWAY'S ABILITY TO CONDUCT A CREDIBLE POLICY IN THESE AREAS."

8. ARBEIDERBLADET CARRIES AN EDITORIAL HEADLINED: "GREY ZONE INVOLVEMENT", WRITES THAT IN VIEW OF THE FACT THAT THE TREATY HAS BEEN KNOWN FOR THREE QUARTERS OF A YEAR, "THE AMERICAN EXPRESSION OF NEGATIVE VIEWS ON THE GREY ZONE AGREEMENT ON THE EVE OF THE STORTING DEBATE GIVES CAUSE FOR SURPRISE. WITH THREE IDENTICAL REPORTS FROM WASHINGTON CORRESPONDENTS, THERE CAN HARDLY BE ANY DOUBT THAT THIS IS A DELIBERATE AMERICAN PLANT OF VIEWS AT A TIME WHICH IS VERY CRUCIAL FOR THE NORWEGIAN AUTHORITIES' HANDLING OF THE MATTER... WE MUST RESPECT THE FACT THAT THE US HAS VIEWS ON THE ZONE AGREEMENT WHICH DIFFER FROM OURS, AND THE AMERICAN VIEWS ARE NOT NEW. THE ASTOUNDING ASPECT OF THIS CASE IS NOT THE CONTENTS OF THE WASHINGTON REPORTS, BUT THE OVBIOUSLY WELL PREPARED TIMING OF THIS INTERFERENCE IN A NORWEGIAN DEBATE. IT IS DIFFICULT TO INTERPRET THE TIMING OF THE MOVE AS ANYTHING BUT A DIRECT INVOLVEMENT IN THE NORWEGIAN POLITICAL DECISION-MAKING PROCESS."

9. AFTER A FLURRY OF PRESS INQUIRES ON MARCH 8, EMBASSY HAS RECEIVED ONLY ONE INQUIRY BY MID MORNING 3/9. WE EXPECT, HOWEVER, THAT THE STORTING DEBATE WILL GENERATE FURTHER INTEREST. WE INTEND TO CONTINUE TO LIMIT COMMENTS HERE TO OUR STANDING STATEMENT WHICH NOTES THAT THE GREY ZONE IS A BILATERAL MATTER ON WHICH US COMMENT WOULD NOT BE APPROPRIATE.

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